

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-11 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 COME-00 EB-07

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4198

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 0196

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, SP

SUBJ: MADRID SUBWAY STRIKE SETTLED - INTENSIFICATION OF OTHER
STRIKE ACTIVITY

REF: (A) MADRID 0154, (B) MADRID 0076

BEGIN SUMMARY. ALTHOUGH GOVT HAS SETTLED SUBWAY STRIKE OTHER
STRIKE ACTIVITY IN METTALURGICAL, CONSTRUCTION, AND OTHER SECTORS IS
INCREASING, AND BECOMING MORE POLITICIZED. THERE WAS ALSO AN ATTEMPT
AT GENERAL STRIKE TODAY, WHICH HAS HAD MIXED SUCCESS. END SUMMARY
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1. MADRID'S WEEK-LONG SUBWAY STRIKE CAME TO AN END AFTER 3,800 STRIKING SUBWAY WORKERS VOTED TO RETURN TO WORK WHEN SUBWAY COMPANY, UNDER GOVT PRESSURE, GAVE IN TO SOME OF SUBWAY WORKERS DEMANDS AND AGREED TO NEGOTIATE ON OTHERS ONCE WORKERS WERE BACK ON THE JOB. AMONG WORKERS DEMANDS GRANTED BY PRIVATELY-OWNED SUBWAY COMPANY WERE AN ADDITIONAL 400 DOLLARS PER YEAR AS WELL AS AGREEMENT NOT TO SANCTION ANY OF STRIKERS. SUBWAY WORKERS, DID VOTE TO RESUME SUBWAY STRIKE AFTER ONE WEEK, I.E. ON JAN 19, IN EVENT COMPANY DID NOT COMPLY WITH ITS PROMISES.

2. DESPITE ABRUPT END OF SUBWAY STRIKE AND WITHDRAWAL OF THE MILITARY PERSONNEL WHO HAD BEEN RUNNING SUBWAYS, LABOR CLIMATE REMAINS TENSE. ON JAN 9, 12,000 WORKER CHRYSLER AUTOMOBILE FACTORY, WHICH HAD BEEN UNDERGOING INTERMITTENT STRIKES RELATED TO ITS CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS, HAD WITNESSED SOME CONFRONTATIONS OF STRIKERS WITH POLICE, AND HAD ANNOUNCED INTENTION TO FIRE 10 WORKERS, WAS CLOSED BY COMPANY LOCKOUT. AT FOUR STANDARD-ITT FACTORIES, WHICH HAVE BEEN UNDERGOING A WELL-ORGANIZED STRIKE DURING PAST MONTH, COMPANY LOCKED OUT WORKERS AT ONE OF FOUR PLANTS JAN 8, THUS PROMPTING ALL 20,000 INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF COMPANY IN MADRID AREA TO STRIKE. IN GETAFE INDUSTRIAL SUBURB MOST FACTORIES, INCLUDING SIEMENS, INTELSA, AND JOHN DEERE PLANTS, HAVE BEEN CLOSED BY EITHER STRIKES OR LOCKOUTS. SITUATION WAS SUCH THAT ON JAN 10, 30,000 MADRID METAL WORKERS WERE EITHER ON STRIKE OR LOCKED OUT, AND TODAY THE NUMBER OF STRIKERS IN THIS SECTOR IS ESTIMATED AT 35,000.

3. THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN INTERMITTENT STRIKES AMONG MADRID CONSTRUCTION, BANK, TELEPHONE, AND CHEMICAL WORKERS. ADDITIONALLY, THERE HAVE BEEN VARIOUS CONFRONTATIONS OF STRIKERS WITH POLICE IN SCATTERED LOCALITIES IN MADRID, OFTEN ON GRAN VIA IN FRONT OF MADRID SSO HEADQUARTERS. POLICE HAVE REPORTEDLY OBSERVED CONSIDERABLE RESTRAINT, BUT HAVE BEEN OBLIGED TO USE TEAR GAS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, IN ITS TOUGHEST MOVE YET, GOVT RESPONDED TO LABOR AGITATION OF LAST FEW DAYS BY ARRESTING, ON JAN 10, SOME 25 WORKERS, WHO ARE MOST ACTIVIST LEADERS OF CLANDESTINE LABOR GROUPS AT VARIOUS OF STRUCK FACTORIES, ALTHOUGH SEVERAL WERE SUBSEQUENTLY RELEASED. BY NOW VIRTUALLY ALL CLANDESTINE LABOR OPPOSITION GROUPS, INCLUDING PCE, ORT, AND PARTIDO DEL TRABAJO OR PDT (ALL THREE OF WHICH PARTICIPATE IN WORKERS

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COMMISSIONS) AS WELL AS DEMOCRATIC USO AND UGT HAVE JOINED IN PROMOTING AND MANIPULATING STRIKE ACTIVITY (PCE, HOWEVER, REPORTEDLY HAS BEEN THE ONE TAKING THE INITIATIVE IN STREET INCIDENTS). ALTHOUGH ALL STRIKES COMMENCED OVER LABOR-RELATED ISSUES, FACT THAT TWO OF COMPANIES AFFECTED, I.E. CHRYSLER AND STANDARD-ITT, ARE AMONG THE BIGGEST MULTINATIONALS IN SPAIN AND ARE AMERICAN-OWNED, HAS GENERATED ANTI-AMERICAN PROPAGANDA IN FLIES OF CLANDESTINE GROUPS.

4. COMMENT. GOVT WON SUBSTANTIAL VICTORY IN ITS CAREFULLY HANDLING OF MADRID SUBWAY STRIKE. IT DID NOT RESORT TO DRAFTING STRIKERS INTO ARMY, (AS IT DID IN 1970 SUBWAY STRIKE) AND ITS TACTIC OF LETTING STRIKE RUN ITS COURSE AND ALLOWING MADRID SUBWAY COMMUTERS, MOST OF THEM WORKERS, TO BUILD UP RESENTMENT OVER DISRUPTION CAUSED BY STRIKE SOON SET PUBLIC OPINION AGAINST STRIKERS. GOVT ALSO AVOIDED CHAOS BY BRINGING IN SPECIAL ARMY PERSONNEL TO RUN MOST ESSENTIAL SUBWAY LINES. THIS DID NOT BENEFIT COMPANY, SINCE GOVT LET SUBWAY USERS RIDE SUBWAY GRATIS (CREDIT HAS REDOUNDED TO NEW SYNDICAL MINISTER MARTIN VILLA WHO INTERVENED IN THE DISPUTE AND STATED ON TELEVISION THAT SOME OF SUBWAY WORKERS DEMANDS WERE JUSTIFIED, BUT THAT WORKERS COULD NOT PREJUDICE GENERAL PUBLIC BY STRIKES IN PUBLIC UTILITIES. TODAY, HOWEVER, THERE IS AN APPEAL BY CLANDESTINE LABOR GROUPS FOR A GENERAL STRIKE, TAKING ADVANTAGE OF BOTH CONTRACT ISSUES AND HEATED POLITICAL CLIMATE, AND ATTEMPT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN RELATIVELY SUCCESSFUL IN CONSTRUCTION AND METAL SECTORS, ALTHOUGH RELATIVELY UNSUCCESSFUL IN THE OTHER SECTORS.

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